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Turkish Contributions to Cultural and Commercial Life along Silk Road

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We will take a general look at Silk Road and its significance, before going on to describe the contributions of Turks to cultural and commercial life along these routes, under six headings.

Oldest and most important overland route of antiquity was what has come to be known as Silk Road, stretching across the east-west axis of Asia from China Sea to Mediterranean Sea. Throughout early and middle ages this vast highway across Central Asia linked northern China in the east with ports of the Mediterranean in the west, passing through Turkistan and the Middle East.

Complementing the overland Silk Road was the sea route by which goods were shipped from eastern Mediterranean ports to those of southern Europe and North Africa. Similarly, networks of lesser highways linked Silk Road to south and north. So serviceable was this ancient caravan route that it remained in use for longer than any other. Existence of the road can be traced back several centuries before Christ, and continued until the latter part of the sixteenth century.

Other major trade routes originating in mists of time also left their mark on civilization before fading from view. In fourth millennium B.C., important trade agreements were concluded in Mesopotamia between Babylon and Hittite capital of Kanish—today known as Kultepe—near Kayseri in Asia Minor. These agreements were recorded by Assyrians on clay tablets to become the first written documents of history.

Archaeological excavations at Kultepe have uncovered a building used as trading post by Assyrians, with records on clay tablets. From these we learn routes taken by traders and types of goods imported to Anatolia.

Caravans set out from Babylon and, following the course of the Tigris and Euphrates, traveled to Cilicia, and from there to the city of Kanish and its famous marketplace known as Karum. Foremost among goods brought west from Babylon were tin, fabrics, perfumes, personal ornaments as well as possibly spices. Return trips from Kanish carried gold ornaments and silver destined for Babylon. With transportation of large quantities of Assyrian tin—used to manufacture bronze—this route was sometimes known as Tin Road.

Another major road of antiquity was Kings Road, dating from the Persian Empire, 500 B.C., which began at the Mesopotamian border city of Susa and

crossed Asia Minor to Sardis, capital of Lydia in western Anatolia. The eastern conquests of Alexander the Great extended this road and forged new contacts between civilizations of East and West, whetting demand for their respective commodities.

Spice Road from India led to the Middle East; Ivory Road led from eastern regions of Central Africa to ports of North Africa, and Egypt in particular; Fur Road led from western Siberia and northern Europe south to Turkistan and the Black Sea; while Steppe Road crossing southern Siberia was used almost exclusively by Turkish peoples in their westward migrations. Amber Road led from gulfs of the northern Baltic to the Black Sea; and Salt Road crossed central Europe. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but sufficient to focus on what may be regarded as most venerable of all these roads, Silk Road.

For more than 2,000 years, Silk Road made extraordinary contributions to human progress with respect both to development of international trade and cultural interchange. By means of Silk Road, dialogues were established between diverse peoples of East and West, new ideas disseminated and technologies transferred.

Although a wide range of goods were exported from China to India, Turkistan, the Middle East and Mediterranean lands—it was silk that most captured popular imagination and so gave its name to the route—Silk Road or Great Silk Road.

Trade was not the only purpose for which Silk Road was employed. Throughout its long history, scholars, pilgrims, proselytizing priests, adventurers, armies on campaign, envoys and messengers traveled it. Nevertheless, the lifeblood of Silk Road was merchants and their goods who plied unceasingly along it, and so it is that we will focus here on the commercial importance of Silk Road.

Camel trains loaded with bales of silk, textiles and other goods, which set out from Chang an and other cities several times a year, were sources of inspiration for Chinese potters, as reflected in the superb Tang period ceramic figures depicting servants loading camels, merchants and other travelers.

The loaded caravan would set out on its long westward journey, lasting many months, interrupted by stops for both rest and trading at various cities and towns along the route, until it reached the shores of the Mediterranean. Here, goods destined for Venice or Genoa were loaded onto ships. Italy, however, was not the last stage of the journey, for these goods subsequently traveled as far as France and the British Isles.

Any comprehensive list of all commodities traded along Silk Road would be impossible to give here. Silk, of course, woven especially for western markets, was a major item, as were porcelain, paper and personal ornaments, all of which brought extremely high prices in the West. Chinese porcelain was greatly valued by the Ottomans, and the magnificent collection at Topkapı Palace in Istanbul is reputed the finest in the world.

From Turkistan came carpets, kilims, gold and silver ware, exported both to

east and west along Silk Road. From Siberia came many different furs, leather goods, dairy products, mercury, copper, iron and other minerals; from Fergana and Tokhara came pedigree horses and camels; from India came spices, medicinal herbs and precious gems; from Europe came textiles, metalware, mirrors, jewelry, precious gems and pharmaceuticals.

Great distances involved and difficulties facing travelers meant that for many centuries direct contact and trade between countries far apart remained nearly impossible. Trade relations were effected by regional stages, goods changing hands time and time again. In this respect, tribes and communities that played an intermediary role in relations and trading along Silk Road were of considerable importance.

The longest section of the road was that passing through the boundless lands of Central and Inner Asia populated by Turks, who were therefore involved in various aspects of Silk Road trade.

The eighth century Orhun monuments of the Gokturk Khanate bear the following inscription on line eight of the south face of Kul Tigin Monument (Plates 1, 2, 3):

"Ol yirgerü barsar Türk bodun ölteci sen. Ötüken yir olurup arkis tirkis isar neng bungug yok. Ötüken yis olursar benggü il tuta olurtaci sen."

("If you remain in Ötüken and send caravans and trains, all your troubles will be at an end. If you live in Ötüken, you will have a homeland for eternity.")

The most inhospitable terrain through which Silk Road passed was that inhabited by Turks, who played a major role in establishing its security. Evidence of this can be found in early documents. For example, Arab traveler Ibn Fadlan, who in A.H. 308 (920/21 A.D.) traveled from Baghdad through Turkistan to the land of the Khazars, describes at length the assistance and protection offered to caravans by Turkish people.

Sogdians were another Central Asian people who made important contributions to expanding trade along Silk Road. Their merchants monopolized trade in many commodities, earning enormous fortunes, and also served as envoys to many foreign nations.

Caravans paid tolls, known as *bac*, to rulers of lands through which they passed. They also engaged in trade with local people. In some cases, conflicts of interest arose between host states over their shares of revenue from wealthy caravans, and wars were fought for their sake, as in case of Byzantines and Sasanids. Gokturks (T'ou-kioue), whose homeland was Mongolia and the Altai mountains, formed alliances with Byzantium against Sasanid Persia to ensure the security of their west-bound caravans.

To the east, China maintained control over Silk Road so that its own goods and purchases would be carried tax-free.

From the time of the Huns (Hsiung-nu), Turks were party to this struggle to control the road, and also sent their own caravans westward. Huns were succeeded

in Inner Asia by a long series of Turkish tribes, which rose to political prominence and founded states across the steppes of Central Asia as far as Carpathia. These included Ogurs, Töles, Sabars, Avars, Bulgars, Pecheneks, Uz and Kumans. Kumans were also known as Kipchaks, and it was with reference to them that the steppes were sometimes known as the Oest-i Kipchak or Kipchak Steppes.

In Central Asia, Turkish states that held control of Silk Road from the time of the Huns until the seventeenth century included Avars, Gokturks, Uighurs, Karakhans, Harezmshahs, Gaznavids, Timurids, Baburs and Seljuks, all of whom took responsibility for security of the caravans, imposing severe penalties for robbery, and even waging war if necessary.

Contributions of Turks to trade along Silk Road may be classified under six main headings:

1. Providing security.
2. Providing a system of justice.
3. Providing accommodation and other needs at caravansaries—Silk Road motels
4. Establishing markets—both open-air and covered—for exchange of goods along Silk Road, and creation of Ahi mystic guild organizations.
5. Minting Turkish coins for use as a common vehicle of exchange on the roads, which facilitated both trade and the accumulation of wealth.
6. Cultural contributions.

The first five of these elements were vital prerequisites without which international trade along Silk Road would not have survived long. The sixth element, culture, was the natural outcome of trade-motivated contacts between peoples.

1. SECURITY

To take the first aspect, security, diverse Turkish states that occupied the vast stretch of land from Mongolia to Anatolia, crossing the Altai and eastern Turkistan, took great pains to keep this artery of trade, Silk Road, safe from marauders. Security was, as it is today, a crucial prerequisite for maintaining commercial activity over this vast and often lonely landscape.

Heavily-laden camels, packhorses and carts were cumbersome and vulnerable to attack from bandits. Countries through which they passed, therefore, had to provide accommodation for night halts that were defensible against assault, and armed patrols and watchtowers (known as *kargu* or *karguy*) in areas of special risk such as deserted areas and mountain passes.

The Seljuk Empire, for instance, actually guaranteed safety of caravans by undertaking to pay compensation from the state treasury for losses incurred by merchants as result of robbery. This dates the concept of insurance several centuries earlier than generally accepted by historians of commerce, who cite insurance as originating with Genoese and Venetians in the fourteenth century.

Armed patrols responsible for keeping law and order accompanied caravans through dangerous territory to protect them from enemy marauders in border areas and from bandits with hideouts in lonely and mountainous regions. The *kargus* mentioned above were also a vital part of this security system. If Turkish peoples of Central Asia and the Middle East had not been successful in this task, Silk Road would have quickly lost its viability.

2. JUSTICE

Another important role played by Turks was the administration of justice. Trade has always been susceptible to dispute: over payments, quality and quantity of goods, as well as orders and deliveries. A reliable system of justice for arbitrating in such disagreements was essential for expansion of trade along Silk Road. Merchants and transporters were secure in knowledge that commercial conflict would be solved justly, saving them from losses.

Various Turkish states maintained courts of law, presided over by *kadis*, or judges, responsible for reaching fair decisions in disputes between individuals, without discriminating on grounds of race, religion, sect or language. *Kadis*, with command of several languages, were appointed to courts in major commercial centers, and were assisted by interpreters from Turkistan, China and Europe.

Written records of court proceedings, known as *seriyye sicilleri* or *seriyye* records throughout the Turkish and Islamic worlds, were kept in these court buildings. *Seriyye* records, still preserved in Turkey, throw valuable light on research into Silk Road, revealing significant clues as to its functions, disputes that arose, how these were resolved and court procedures.

I am convinced that, in this respect, Ottoman archives can make vital contributions to our knowledge of Silk Road, within the scope of the project initiated by UNESCO.

3. ACCOMMODATION—CARAVANSERAI

Not only did merchants and other travelers along Silk Road require food and sleeping accommodation, but their animals required stabling and fodder, and valuable goods they carried needed safekeeping.

In regions ruled by Turkish states, shelters were constructed at 30 to 40 kilometer intervals, an average day's journey. Known as caravanserais, these were motels of the time, strongly fortified against assault and theft. Generally, cost of construction was met by sultans or statesmen as an act of philanthropy. For a maximum of three days, travelers were regarded as guests of the benefactor. Food, water and place to sleep were provided free of charge, as were such services as shoe repair and horseshoeing.

In early times caravanserais were known as *ribat*, the Arabic word referring in its original sense to forts at strategic points along frontiers and used as guardposts.

In time the concept was adopted by Turks of Central Asia for their commercially-oriented institution, caravanserai, a term that came into increasingly widespread use. In Transoxania and territory ruled by Great Seljuks in Iran from the eleventh century onward, *ribat* became synonymous with caravanserai, and this meaning was reinforced under Karakhanids, Ghaznavids and Anatolian Seljuks.

The fact that *ribats* in this sense were built first in east and west Turkistan and subsequently in the Middle East and Anatolia is clear evidence of the Turkish origins of this institution. The concept of military defense underlying the Arabic meaning of *ribat* was modified in Inner Asia into the related commercial concept.

Caravanserais of Karakhanids, Ghaznavids and Great Seljuks had the appearance of forts. Generally rectangular in shape, they were built around one or sometimes two courtyards with *eyvans*, and constructed of adobe or brick.

The Karakhani caravansary built by Nasr bin Ibrahim in 1078–1079 and known as Ribat-i Malik is typical example of this type, with its fluted facade and central courtyard. Eleventh and twelfth century caravanserais of Dehistan, El Asker, Akçakale and Basane (Kurtlu Şehir) have two courtyards and, in this respect, remind us strongly of the Sultan Khans, most impressive of Anatolian caravansaries. Apart from Ribat-i Mahi, dating from the first quarter of eleventh century or Ghaznavid period and built around a four *eyvan* courtyard, caravanserais of Great Seljuks are finest of all.

Great and Anatolian Seljuk caravansaries fulfilled two primary functions, related to commerce and to political aspects of commerce. Both these functions were also valid for the earlier Karakhanids and Ghaznavids.

1. Firstly, valuable goods carried by caravans had to be provided with resting places which were safe against attack by enemy forces and bandits. Therefore, they were surrounded by high fortified walls, sometimes equipped with towers and turrets, and heavy, strong gates of iron. With few discrepancies, the caravanserai design of Inner Asia is similar to that of the Seljuks, demonstrating continuity.

2. Secondly, caravanserais had to meet all needs of those who sought shelter, and their facilities were impressive. They often contained dormitories, granaries, warehouses for commercial goods, stables, straw barns, *masjids* for worship, baths, fountains for ablutions, hospitals, pharmacies, cobblers—who not only repaired shoes but made new ones for poor travelers—and blacksmiths. Moreover, they contained administrative offices staffed by officials responsible for the finances and management of the caravansary.

These caravanserais were largely *wakfs* or pious endowments, and we learn from the *Siyaset-name* (Political Treatise) of Seljuk vizier Nizam-al-Mulk that “one of the main duties of rulers is to build *ribats* at important points along roads.” (Caravansaries were property of *wakfs* and their size and range of services provided depended upon financial resources of the endowment. The *wakf* charter of Karatay Caravansary, dating from 1240–41, on Kayseri-Malatya road, is a valuable document that illustrates in detail functions of Seljuk caravansaries. This charter specifies appointment of an *imam* to the khan’s *masjid*, and the wage he is to

receive, wages and duties of the khan keeper, *havayis* or clerk, cooks and other officials; describes what services are to be provided for travelers arriving at the caravanserai; how needs of animals are to be met; who is to provide such services as shoe repairs, horseshoeing, and how; treatment of sick travelers; and payment of funeral expenses.

Seljuks went to great lengths to keep the Middle East region of Silk Road an international trade route, and it is thanks to this policy that a network of caravanserais grew up throughout this area. Tabriz, for example, was one of the primary junctions of roads carrying heavy traffic into Anatolia. From Tabriz, the road led to Erzurum, Erzincan, Sivas, Tokat, Ankara, Bolu, Bursa and Istanbul. In the opposite direction, the road led east out of Tabriz, and was used by merchants of Mazanderan (southern shore of Caspian Sea), north Azerbaijan (Gence, Shirvan), and Georgian merchants of Tiflis. It took 40 days for caravans to make their way from Tabriz to Konya, capital city of Anatolian Seljuks, and we know that along the road, between Kayseri and Sivas alone, there were no fewer than 24 caravanserais.

From Kayseri another important road led to Aleppo via Goksun and Maras; while the road from Iraq to Istanbul linked Diyarbakir, Urfa, Birecik, Adana, Konya, Aksehir, Kutahya and Bursa. Of considerable local importance was an east-west route from Alaiye (Antalya) through Anatolia. Another north-south Anatolian caravan route commenced at the Black Sea port of Sinop, passed through Tokat and joined the east-west roads at Sivas to continue to Malatya and Aleppo, then a vigorous commercial city. Again from Malatya, trade roads led to Amida (former name for Diyarbakir), Mosul, Baghdad and other destinations. Merchants from northern lands traveled to Kayseri, where the famous international Yabanlu Market was held. Seljuks succeeded in developing the market at Sivas to supersede Yabanlu, and large numbers of merchants from Genoa, Venice, Naples, Pisa, Byzantium, Russia, Kipchak, Syria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran and inner regions of Turkistan gathered there to trade with one another.

At these markets, Italian merchants bought thoroughbred horses and carpets from Turkomans to sell in Europe, and Turkish harnesses and saddles became sought-after items. In Venice an Ottoman caravansary still stands, significant evidence of extent of Turkish trade.

Finest of Great Seljuk caravanserais that have survived to the present day are Ribat-i Anusirvan, Ribat-i Zaferani (twelfth century) and Ribat-i Serif (1114-15). The last was built during the reign of Ebu Suca, son of Malik Shah, on the Nishapur-Serakhs road. Approximately square in plan, the main building has a courtyard with four *eyvans*, and in front of it a second rectangular building also with courtyard and four *eyvans* (Plates 4, 5, 6).

Although Anatolian Seljuk caravanserais resembled those of Karakhanids, Ghaznavids and Great Seljuks in design, they were built of stone instead of adobe and brick. Some had roofed areas, some were open, and some were a combination of both.

Following are examples of Anatolian Seljuk caravanserais:

The first sultan's khan, or imperial caravanserai, was Alay Khan built in Anatolia by Kilicarslan II (1156-92) on Aksaray-Kayseri road. Similar survivors are the Sultan Khan (1229) on Konya-Aksaray road, Semseddin Altinapa Khan (1291) on Konya-Beysehir road, Kiziluren Khan (A.H. 603) on Beysehir road, and other early thirteenth century caravansaries, all of which consist of courtyard and enclosed hall.

The second caravansary constructed for a sultan was the early thirteenth century Evdir Khan on Antalya-Isparta road built by Izzeddin Keykavus I. This has no enclosed area, consisting only of courtyard surrounded by vaults and colonnades. Of similar design are Tas Khan (1218) on Sivas-Malatya road, Kadin Khan on Konya-Aksehir road, and Ertokus Khan (1223) on Egridir-Konya road.

An example of particular interest is the Sultan Khan built in 1225 by Sultan Alaeddin Keykubat I on Konya-Aksaray road, consisting of enclosed hall and open colonnaded courtyard. The covered section has three aisles, and a dome with skylights over the central area. In the center of the courtyard is a kiosk *masjid*.

Sultan Khan (1232-36) on Kayseri-Sivas road (Plates 7, 8, 9), Alara Khan (1232) on Antalya-Konya road, Cardak Khan on Egridir-Denizli road, Saadettin Khan (Zazadin Khan, 1237) on Konya-Aksaray road, Incir Khan (1238-39) on Antalya-Isparta road, Kirkgoz Khan also on Antalya-Isparta road, Sarapasa Khan on Alanya-Antalya road, Susuz Khan on Antalya-Isparta road, and Agzikara Khan, Karatay Khan and Sari Khan in Avanos number among the most important caravanserais in Anatolia built by Sultan Alaeddin Keykubat.

Agzikara Khan (1231-37) combined open and covered sections, two portals, raised kiosk *masjid* and decorative hall dome, and is as fine architecturally as any other example. Karatay Khan was built by Celaleddin Karatay, its hall dating from the reign of Alaeddin Keykubat but its courtyard from 1240-47. With addition of turrets to a classic Seljuk caravanserai plan, it takes on the appearance of a castle.

Most magnificent of the caravanserais dating from the reign of Izzeddin Keykavus II is Avanos Sari Khan on Kayseri-Aksaray road. Again consisting of covered hall and an open area, the kiosk *masjid* has been located above the entrance, left of which is an *eyvan* containing fountain and opening onto the courtyard, in the right-hand corner of which are baths.

These caravanserais, providing both security and accommodation for caravans along Silk Road, are the most striking evidence of the importance attached by Turkish peoples to this route. Here travelers were provided not only with sleeping accommodation, but also clothing, food, drink, heating and other necessities. Commercial and travel "insurance", applied for the first time in the history of trade, had a supportive function.

4. MARKETING

Fourth contribution of Turks to trade along Silk Road is what we might

summarize as marketing. In other words, provision of facilities for display and exchange of goods, in the form of covered bazaars and shops in cities through which Silk Road passed.

Only in an urban context could trade in increasingly sophisticated commodities develop and diversify on any regular and reliable basis. And for this, places were needed where customers and sellers could get together; where goods could be delivered in large quantities and conveniently displayed. In these places, gradually grew up a class of sedentary tradesmen, experts at evaluating goods brought by traveling merchants and with capital to invest. They carried out their business in covered bazaars, typical Turkish institutions, and stored their goods in commercial buildings known as khans. A third type of Turkish commercial structure was the *bedesten*, originally reserved for textiles but subsequently used exclusively for sale and safekeeping of precious items and antiques. Textiles played a leading role in trade, and throughout Asia such bazaars developed around shops of cloth merchants.

From the thirteenth century onward, these *bezzaziye* khans were forerunners of later *bedestens* in Anatolia. Although few examples survive today, there is considerable documentary evidence pointing to widespread existence of *bezzaziye* in Seljuk and Beylik periods.

Emergence of *bedesten* as a concept dates from the late thirteenth century, but it was in Ottoman times that they developed into custom-built architectural units, rather than just agglomerations of individual shops. They became semi-official commercial institutions that brought the state and merchants into direct contact. They also performed a vital economic function by providing safe-deposit facilities for valuables, and it was here that exchange of precious goods took place. Fair dealing and security were foremost characteristics of *bedestens*. As a key institution in commerce and finance, other shops and business premises clustered around the *bedesten*.

Architecturally, *bedestens* can be classified into six groups. Briefly, one of the most important surviving *bedestens* in Turkey is that of Edirne, built in the first half of the fifteenth century by Çelebi Sultan Mehmet (Plate 10). Part of the *wakf* of Eski Mosque, it is built of a combination of brick and dressed stone, and it has 14 domes.

A further type of commercial structure was the *arasta*, consisting of two facing rows of shops along a street, built to provide rental income for *wakfs*. Most notable *arasta* is undoubtedly that of Selimiye Mosque, built by architect Sinan in 1569–74 in Edirne, by order of Sultan Selim II (Plate 11). This *arasta* was built a century after Selimiye Mosque by Davud Agha, during the reign of Sultan Murat III, and it is located below the magnificent terrace of this great mosque. Two hundred meters in length, this *arasta* consists of 197 shops and houses.

Government controls over price and quality in all commercial institutions described above were designed to protect customers from dishonest dealers (Plates 12, 13). In addition, Turkish merchants and tradesmen developed their own auto-

control organization, known as *Ahi*, which was extensively involved in all aspects of commerce ranging from production, training of apprentices and journeymen, to actual marketing of goods. The *Ahi* guild, which was active in rural as well as urban areas, also performed a social function by providing mutual help, protecting rights and enforcing regulations.

5. CURRENCY ON SILK ROAD

Common monetary vehicle of exchange is essential to facilitate economic activities, which if restricted to barter alone would be severely hampered. As soon as any Turkish state was founded, one of its most urgent tasks was to mint coins. Those along Silk Road minted standard silver and gold coins, which enjoyed validity over a wide region during Karakhanid, Ghaznavid and Seljuk periods. This not only facilitated trade, but also accumulation of wealth in regions along Silk Road.

6. CULTURE

As commercial and political contact between peoples of East and West stepped up, cultural exchanges increased accordingly. Silk Road, therefore, played a significant role in shaping world culture, as well as influencing commercial and political life. From one end to the other of this international highway, contact between peoples disseminated disparate cultural elements, particularly those of art. Silk Road facilitated innumerable instances of cultural borrowing between steppe Turks and Chinese, while Turks during their westward migrations carried many elements of eastern culture with them, as in the case of handicrafts and decorative arts.

Buddhist priests traveled to and fro between China and India for centuries, and from the West spread such sects as Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. Before their adoption of Islam in the ninth and tenth centuries, Buddhism and Persian doctrine of Manichaeism were widespread among Turks. Plastic arts were frequently employed as vehicles of propaganda by missionaries, while music and literature, too, were companions of religious movements.

Turks spread painting and plastic arts of China and eastern and western Turkistan to the Middle East and other areas to the west. Turkish-Islamic style of miniature painting arose in the Middle East.

Legends and folk tales are another element of culture carried along Silk Road. One such was the tale of Dede Korkut, which traveled from mouth to mouth across Transcaucasia and was put into writing in late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries by *bahşis* or minstrels who roamed these lands. Dede Korkut tells the history of the Oğuz tribe, forerunner of western Turks. There are two manuscripts of this legend in existence today, one in Dresden and the other in the Vatican. The story, written in Old Anatolian Turkish, takes place in eastern Anatolia and Azerbaijan. It is a

story that must certainly have appealed to diverse Turkish peoples living along Silk Road because its setting ranges from the Central Asian homeland of Oğuz Turks, to Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia, where they eventually settled.

Another story worthy of study because of its shared cultural factors is the Koroğlu legend, which has been told for centuries among Turks of the Soviet Union. Like stories of Oğuz in the book of Dede Korkut, this legend dates from before the advent of Islam among the Turks, but has been embroidered with new episodes with the telling, unlike Manas legend. Cropping up over a very wide geographical area, the name of the hero varies from place to place. In different regions, Koroğlu is known as Koroğlu, Kûroğlu, Karaoğlu, Geroğlu, Rencum, Ruşen, Rempul Ruşen, Kürdâpiloğlu, Rüşsen Ali and so on.

Absence of any early copies of these versions of the Koroğlu legends and existence of more vivid and strongly defined Indian versions suggests that they originated in India and were adopted by Turks; it is an interesting example of the extent of cultural exchange among nations using Silk Road. In this respect, Koroğlu legend deserves inclusion in UNESCO's Silk Road project.

Stories of Nasreddin Hoca, that witty commentator on the human condition, are a famous genre of Turkish humor. Born in Sivrihisar in 1200, Nasreddin Hoca died in Akşehir in 1284. He spent his childhood in the border area between Seljuk Anatolia and Byzantium. After settling in Akşehir in 1237, Nasreddin Hoca is recorded by some sources as serving as a *müderris* (teacher in a *madrakah*) and *kadi*. At his own request, Nasreddin Hoca was buried upon his death in a tomb with door and large padlock but no walls—his parting jest.

Nasreddin Hoca jokes generally display subtle wit, ridiculing human naivety; rating highly qualities needed for practical life such as quick-wittedness and cunning; advising good-humored tolerance in relations with other people; and accepting misfortune with a smile. In other words, they embody a purely rational philosophy of life. His jokes have been told from generation to generation for centuries, not only throughout Turkish regions but also in neighboring countries; over the past century they have been extensively translated into western languages. Because characters that figure in the stories are typical of human beings everywhere, they enjoy international appeal. Nasreddin Hoca's philosophy of life thus has exerted strong cultural influence on diverse peoples and nations all along Silk Road, from Iran to Italy and North Africa.

7. CONCLUSION

Trade with the East along Silk Road, main highway linking East and West, across Europe and Asia, ended up entirely in the hands of Islamic and Turkish traders. Moghul incursions had earlier caused upheavals in political structure of the region, bringing trade along Silk Road virtually to a halt. European merchants failed in their attempt to regain their hold on the road, but European determination to resume lucrative trade with the Far East fueled the search to discover a sea

passage to India. The exploratory voyages opened up the route around Cape of Good Hope in the fifteenth century, and led to the decline and eventual abandonment of Silk Road, as sea transportation, both cheaper and easier, superseded caravans.

Note: A symposium and exhibition of Turkish-Islamic arts of the book, to be initiated by UNESCO in cooperation with cooperation of Topkapi Palace Library, would make a valuable contribution to understanding cultural relationships between East and West. Within the scope of such symposium, the following subjects could be offered:

- I — Painting and sculpture in the extremely heterogeneous region of Eastern Turkistan.
- II — Cities of East Turkistan that grew up along the southern and northern branches of Silk Road.
- III — Plastic arts of West Turkistan (Balaliktepe, Varaksa, Penjikent).
- IV — Painting in Omayyad and Abbasid periods and Samarra.
- V — Early Islamic illuminated manuscripts about theology, science, philosophy and fiction.
- VI — Seljuk period miniatures, known as the Baghdad School, and Anatolian miniatures of the same period.
- VII — Il-Khanid miniatures.
- VIII — Timurid period miniatures and those of such artistic centers as Herat, Samarkand and Shiraz.
- IX — Second half of the fifteenth century, Baykara palace academy of Herat Mirza Huseyin, Vazi Ali Sir Nevai (Chagatai literature), Behzad.
- X — Miniatures of Karakoyunlu and Akkoyunlu Turkomans.
- XI — First Ottoman miniatures, periods of Sultan Mehmet II, Beyazid II and Yavuz Selim, and developments during the reign of Suleiman the Magnificent.
- XII — Advent of the classical period following the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, and evolution of an original style.
- XIII — Ottoman miniature painting of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

I further believe that a numismatic exhibition of gold and silver coins in circulation along Silk Road would be of considerable interest within the context of the UNESCO Silk Road projects (Plates 14, 15, 16, 17, 18).

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PLATES

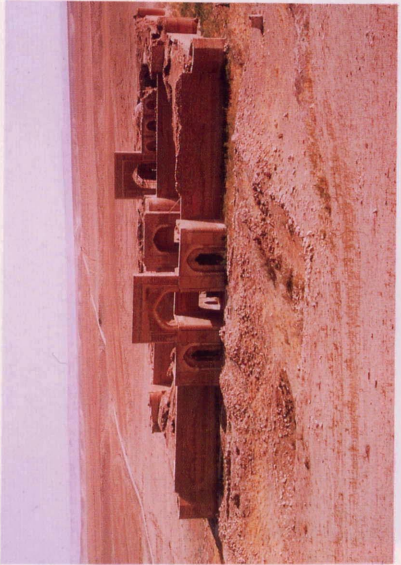
1. Göktürk burial complex of Gultekin (Tou-kiue) in Orhun Valley in Mongolia. To left can be seen the 3.75-meter-high Gultekin Monument, erected by Bilge Khan on 1 August 732 in commemoration of his brother Kul Tigin, who died 27 February 731.
2. Western face of eighth century Gultekin stele, bearing Chinese translation of Turkish text in Orhun alphabet on the eastern face.
3. Headless statue of Bilge Kagan in the Bilge Kagan burial complex (8th century).
4. Ribat-i Melik caravanserai on Bukhara-Samarkand road built in 1078-79 by Sems ul Muluk Nasr bin Ibrahim, ruler of Karakhanids and son-in-law of Sultan Alp Arslan.
5. Ribat-i Serif caravanserai built in 1114-15 between Nishapur and Merv, at a desolate point on great Khorasan road near to Serakhs' during reign of Ebu Suca Mehmed, son of the the Great Seljuk sovereign Meliksah.
6. Plan of Ribat-i Serif. In front of nearly square main space is an adjoining rectangular area. Rooms lead off four-eyvan courtyard. This is most splendid of all Great Seljuk caravanserais.
- 7 & 7a. Anatolian Seljuk Sultan Khans near Aksaray and Kayseri (thirteenth century).
8. Reconstruction of Sultan Khan between Kayseri and Sivas.
9. Plan of Sultan Khan on the Kayseri-Sivas road.
10. Edirne Bedesten, built by Sultan Mehmed Celebi as part of endowment of Edirne Eski Mosque.
11. Seventeenth century arasta of Selimiye Mosque (1569-75), seen in background. This mosque represents the summit of classical Ottoman architecture.
12. Shopping in Istanbul covered bazaar (engraving).
13. Shopping in spice section of the Istanbul covered bazaar (engraving).
14. Seventh century Turkish coin minted during reign of Sahi Tegin, ruler of Khorasan.
15. Gold coin dating from reign of Yamin al-Dawla Sultan Mahmud (A.H. 414) the Ghaznavid ruler.
16. Copper coins minted by Seljuk Atabeyi.
17. Copper coins minted by Seljuk Artuklu principality.
18. Copper coins minted by Seljuk Artuklu principality.



Pl. 10. Edirne Bedesten, built by Sultan Medmed Celebi (1418).



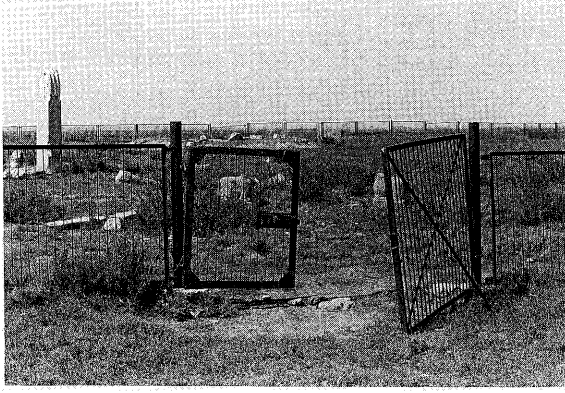
Pl. 11. Seventeenth century arasta of Selimiye Mosque (1569-75).



Pl. 5. Ribat-i Serif caravanserai built in 1114-15 (Great Seljuk period).



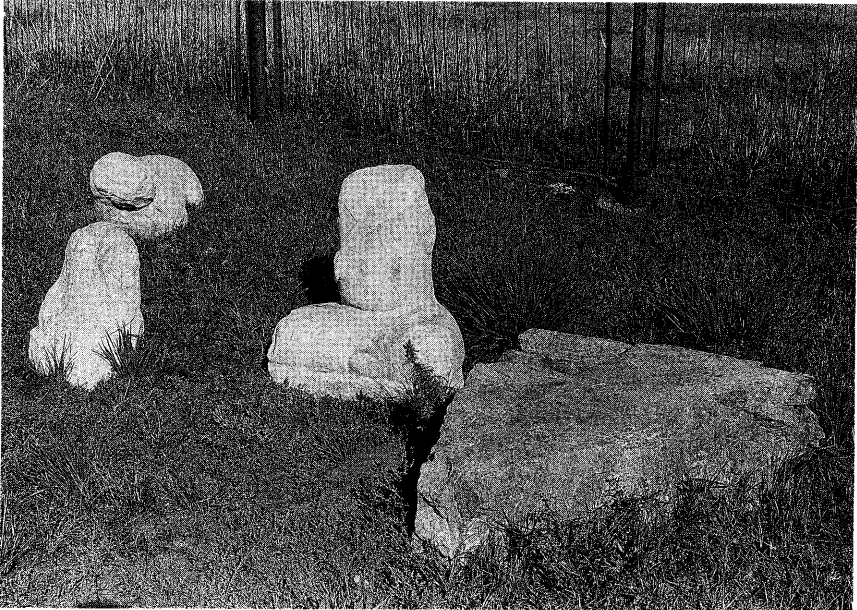
Pl. 7. Anatolian Seljuk Sultan Khan (1229) between Konya and Aksaray.



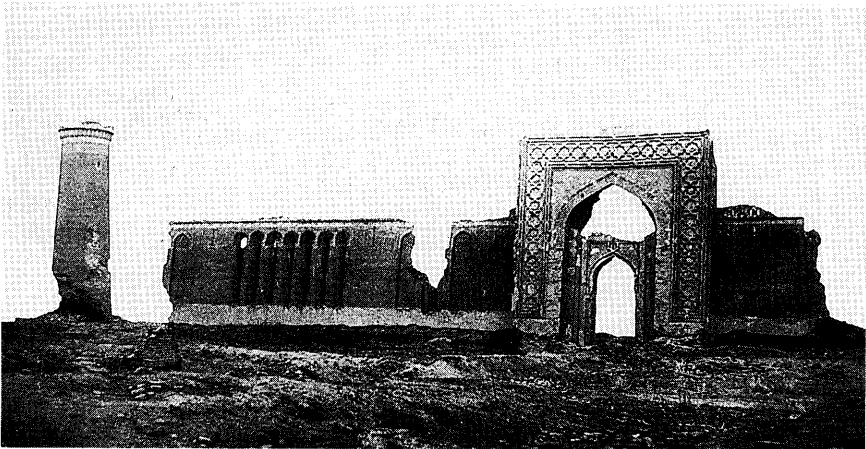
Pl. 1. The Göktürk burial complex of Gultekin (Tou-kiue) in Orhun Valley in Mongolia.



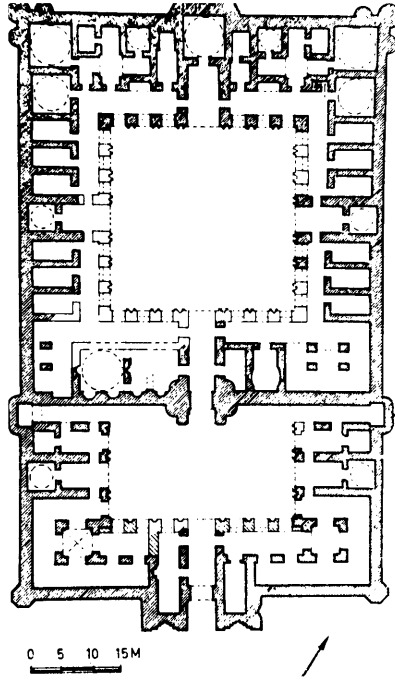
Pl. 2. Western face of the eighth century Gultekin stele, bearing Chinese translation of Turkish text in the Orhun alphabet on the eastern face.



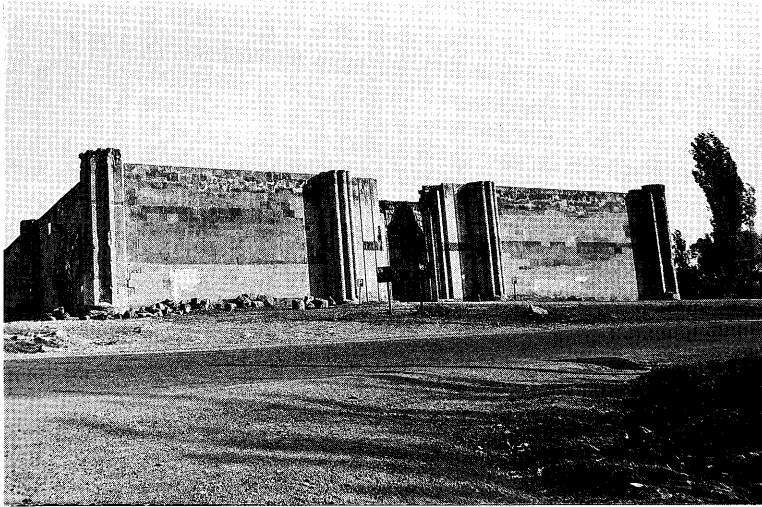
Pl. 3. The headless statue of Bilge Kagan in the Bilge Kagan burial complex (8th century).



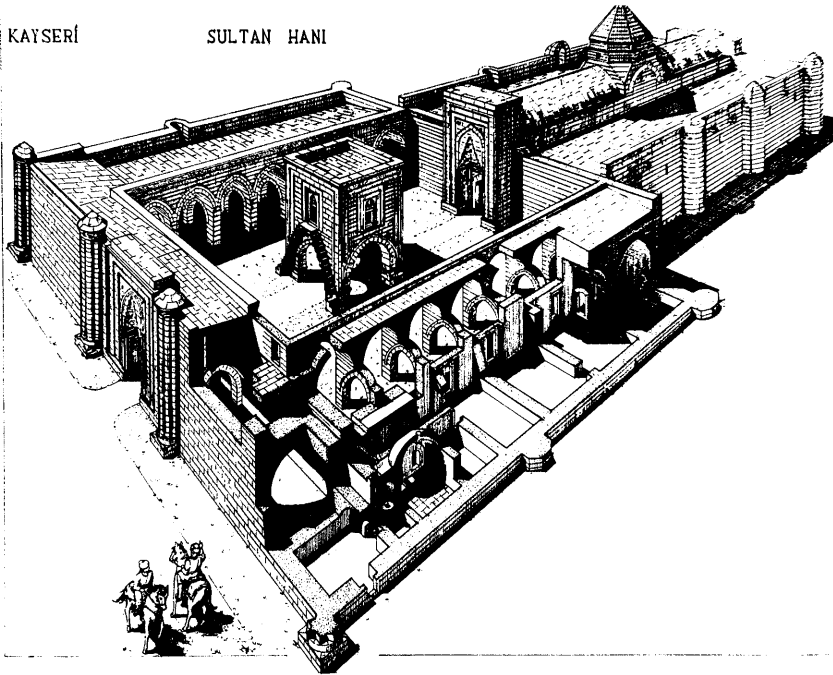
Pl. 4. Ribat-i Melik, caravanserai on Bukhara-Samarkand road built in 1078-79 (Turkish Karakhanid period).



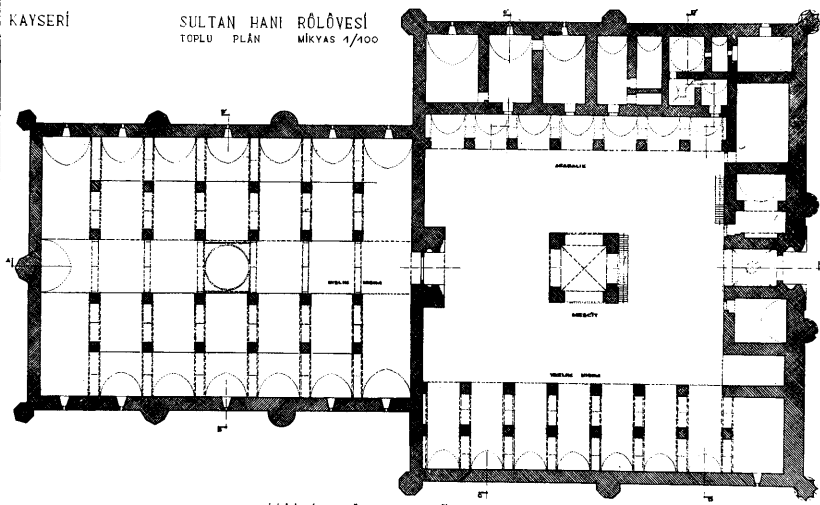
Pl. 6. Plan of Ribat-i Serif (Great Seljuk period).



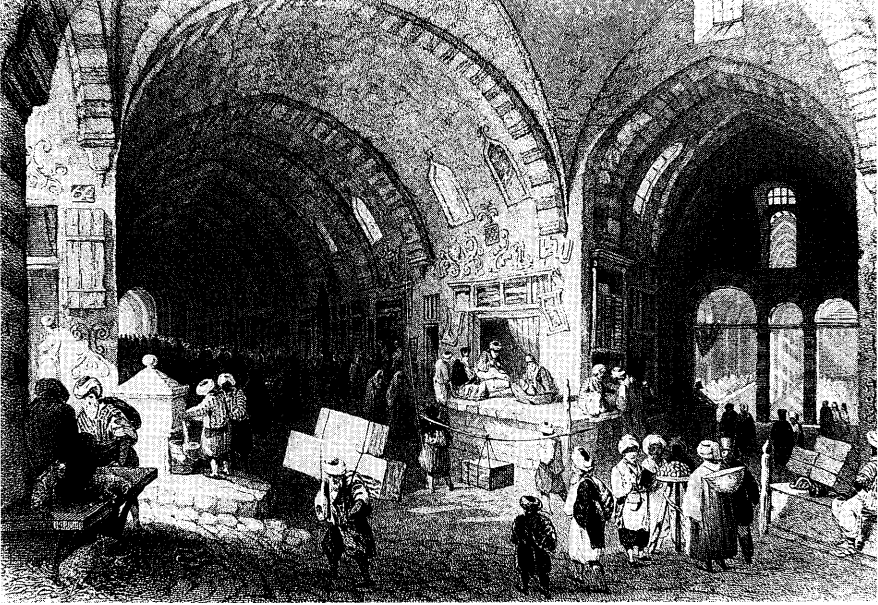
Pl. 7a. Anatolian Seljuk Sultan Khan between Kayseri and Sivas (1232-36).



Pl. 8. Reconstruction of Sultan Khan between Kayseri and Sivas.



Pl. 9. Plan of Sultan Khan on the Kayseri-Sivas road (1232-36).



Pl. 12. Shopping in Istanbul covered bazaar (engraving).



Pl. 13. Shopping in spice section of the Istanbul covered bazaar (engraving).



Pl. 14. Seventh century Turkish coin minted during reign of Sahi Tegin, ruler of Khorasan.



Pl. 15. Gold coin dating from reign of Yamīn al-Dawla Sultan Maḥmūd, the Ghaznavid ruler.



Pl. 16. Copper coins minted by Seljuk Atabeys.



Pl. 17. Copper coins minted by Seljuk Artuklu principality.



Pl. 18. Copper coins minted by Seljuk Artuklu principality.